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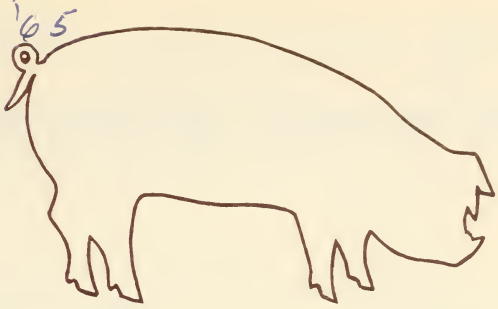

The MEAT-TYPE HOG

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Leaflet No. 429
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The MEAT-TYPE HOG

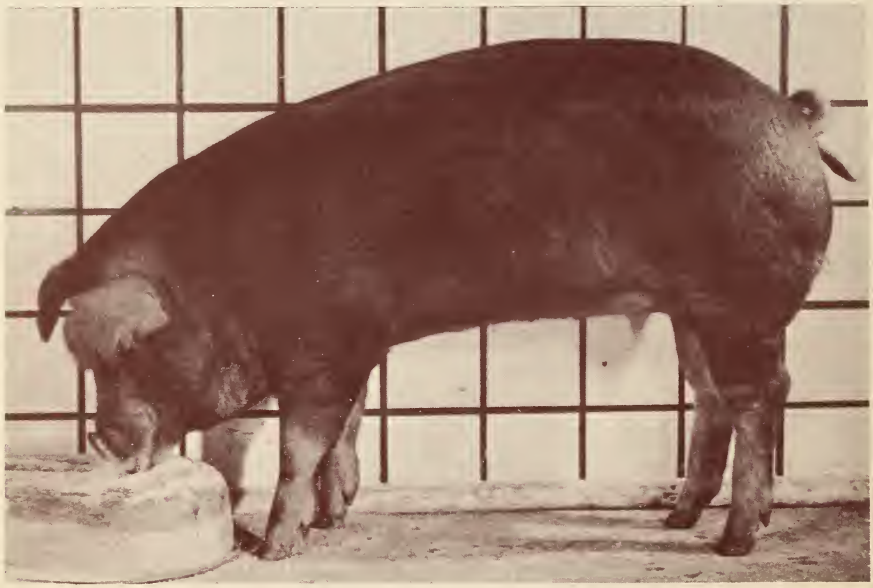
Too fat . . . Does that fit your hogs? Are you still raising fat hogs? Are you hurting the pork market by producing meat that neither you nor other consumers want?

Who suffers most when the market isn't supplied with the lean, meaty hams and pork loins that consumers want? Not the retailer—he can sell other kinds of meat. Not the consumer—he can buy those other meats. The one who pays for these lost sales is the hog farmer.

Ask yourself this question: Would you eat the pork you produce?

The meat-type hog is thickly muscled, long, and lean. Compared with the fat hog, more of his live weight goes into the lean pork that consumers demand and less goes into fat and lard. His greater length yields more loin cuts.

Most characteristics of the meat type must be bred into the hog—others are fed into him.



BN-24322

Are your hogs meat type . . .

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A MEAT-TYPE HOG

A meat-type hog weighing 201 to 230 pounds measures about 42 inches from a line between the base of his ears to the root of his tail. You can measure your hogs quickly with a 42-inch stick.

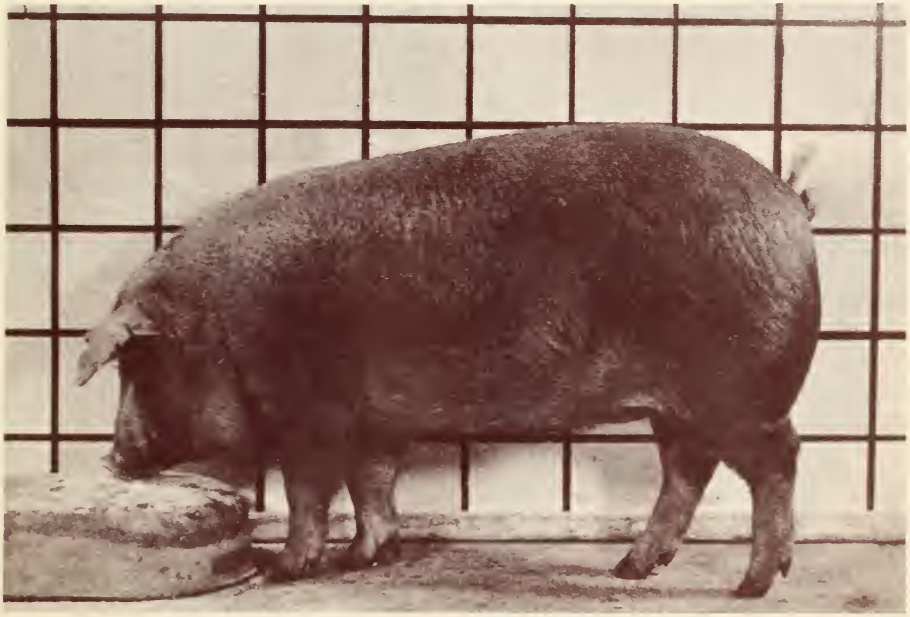
A meat-type hog weighing 201 to 215 pounds has not more than 1.65 inches of backfat, nor less than 1.1 inches. A meat-type hog weighing 216 to 230 pounds has not more than 1.7 inches of backfat, and not less than 1.2 inches. Measure backfat thickness with a metal-rule probe or a lean meter. Ask your county agent for details of how to measure backfat thickness.

When your meat-type hog is ready for market, his flesh is firm, not flabby. He has little excess fat on jowl, back, belly, or lower ham. He is trim and well balanced. His width is uniform from front to rear and from topline to underline. He looks fleshy but not fat.

Sell your hogs when they fit this description. They will yield over 50 percent of their carcass weight in trimmed hams, loins, picnics, and Boston butts.

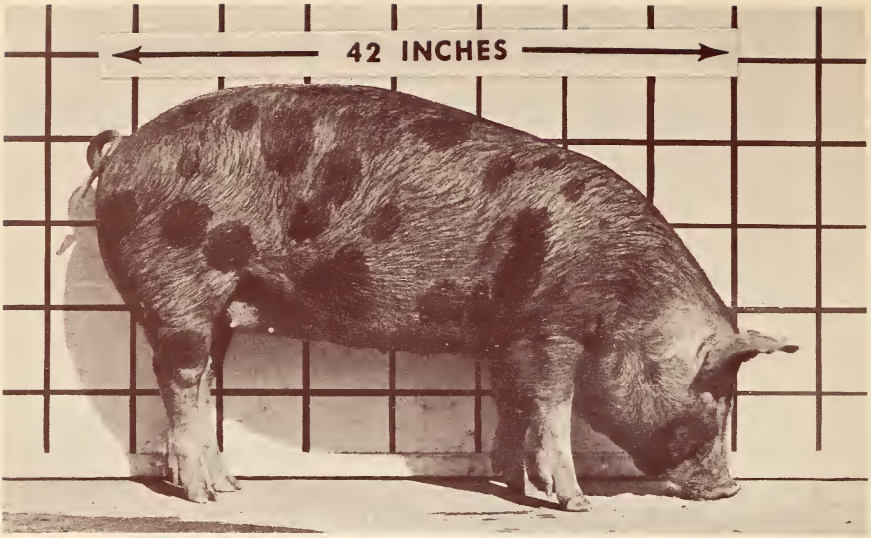
The fat hog usually is short. His back is wide and has thick fat along the edges so that it looks nearly flat. His flesh is flabby and his fat shakes when he walks. His four lean cuts generally are less than 47 percent of his carcass weight. A hog that yields lean cuts of 47 to 50 percent usually is intermediate between meat type and fat.

The "counterfeit" seems to have the right length, and he seems to have the right finish. He sometimes is mistaken for a meat-type hog. When you slaughter him, he'll have more fat and less lean than you want. The "counterfeit" has a "cat" ham



BN-24323

. . . Or the old-fashioned fat kind?



BN-24321

Measure the meat-type hog from base of ears to root of tail.

with too much fat around the crotch. He has a flabby belly and a narrow rump. His jowls tend to hang. His frame seems finer boned than it should be. Probably, he'll stand with his feet close together.

HOW TO RAISE MEAT-TYPE HOGS

Develop meat-type strains of hogs by carefully selecting your breeding stock. Combine this selection with good feeding and management practices.

Breeding

Although some breeds generally yield more lean meat than others, you can develop meat-type hogs from any breed by careful selection.

In your own herd, line breed to intensify characteristics of superior meat-type hogs. Cross superior strains either within breeds or between breeds for maximum hybrid vigor.

Performance records will help you select stock that is prolific, fast growing, and efficient in converting feed into pork. Measure backfat thickness on all animals at 175 to 200 pounds. Keep and use these records.

Whenever possible, pigs exceeding 1.4 inches in backfat thickness at these weights should not be saved for breeding.

If you are not selling in a market that buys graded hogs, look around you. Your meat-type hogs are worth more where hogs are sold by grade. Most meat-type hogs will grade as U.S. No. 1 at desirable market weights of around 200 to 230 pounds. You can obtain a copy of Official United States Standards for Grades of Slaughter Swine (Barrows, Gilts, and Sows), Service and Regulatory Announcement No. 172, from the Livestock Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Ear notch litters and individual pigs at birth so they are easy to identify.

Select for long-bodied hogs that are heavily muscled over the loins and hams and have smooth shoulders and trim jowls. Avoid short, chuffy, heavy-jowled hogs that are too fat.

A sow should have at least 12 well-developed teats.

Remember that a barrow at 200 pounds generally will have 0.3 inch more backfat than a littermate boar at the same weight. Use a boar with less backfat than you want his offspring to have. Otherwise his offspring will be too fat.

Measure backfat thickness on all animals at 175 to 200 pounds. The potential value of collecting and using backfat measurements is clearly indicated by breeding trials now in progress at the USDA Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md. Three lines are being developed within each of the Duroc and Yorkshire breeds—a high-fat line, a low-fat line, and an unselected control line—the aim being to determine (1) how selection based primarily on backfat thickness affects carcass desirability and other economic traits and (2) how stock possessing the desired quality of product can best be used for improving the efficiency of commercial meat-type hog production.

Results based on seven generations of selection in the Duroc breed show that backfat thickness increased from 1.49 to 2.01 inches in the high-fat line and decreased from 1.49 to 1.22 inches in the low-fat line. Along with these changes in backfat thickness, seventh generation low-fat line pigs excelled high-fat line pigs by 7.2 pounds or 9 percent in yield of lean cuts, by 1.29 square inches or 49 percent in loin eye muscle area, and averaged 13.1 pounds or 34 percent less in yield of fat cuts. Selection for low fatness has resulted in no measurable decline in rate of growth or feed efficiency, whereas in high-fat line Duroc pigs both of these traits have deteriorated rather markedly.

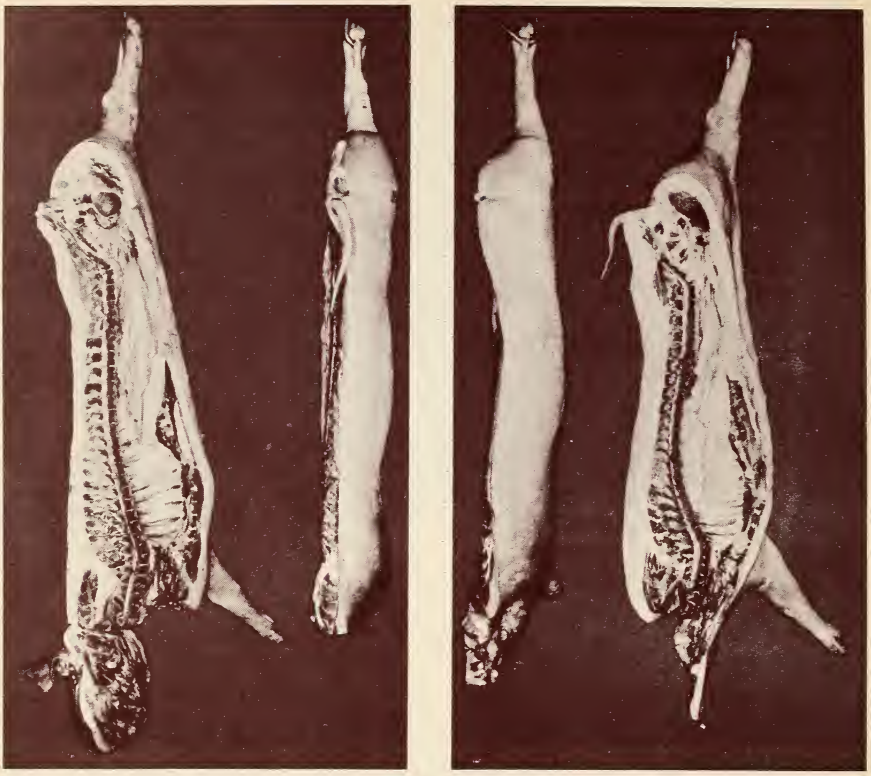
Information on backfat thickness combined with that on other traits should offer excellent opportunities for producing meatier market hogs and increasing the efficiency of swine production generally. Similar results are being obtained in the Yorkshire breed.

Aim to raise eight or more pigs a litter. Watch boar pigs from large litters—how fast they grow and how much feed they use. Measure their backfat and watch for other meat-type characteristics. Keep the best for breeding stock.

Join a meat-type certification program conducted by your breed or swine improvement association. Get reports of carcass quality of your previously marketed hogs when they

N-20091 and N-20093

Learn how the meat type (left) compares with the fat hog (right).



N–20762 and N–20766

Compare the carcasses of a meat type (left) and a fat hog (right).

are available through that association. Use the reports to help you select better breeding stock.

For detailed information and advice, consult your county agricultural agent, breed association, State or local swine growers association, swine testing station, or the National Swine Growers Council.

Feeding

Balanced rations are essential to producing meat-type hogs. Supplement farm grains with protein-mineral supplements. The farm grain can be yellow corn, wheat, barley, or oats, depending on availability. In feeding value, 100 pounds of corn is worth approximately 97 pounds of wheat, 110 pounds of barley, or 126 pounds of oats.

Both good breeding and proper feeding are needed to produce meat-type hogs on your "assembly line." Select your stock for the future. BUT, feed your present hogs to the weight—around 200 to 230 pounds—and backfat thickness that go with the lean pork consumers want. Most of them will sell at higher prices where hogs are sold on a graded basis.

BN-24320, BN-24324

Produce lean, meaty pork loins, bacon, and hams (top).

Using superior breeding stock and improved feeds, you can produce meat-type hogs that weigh 200 pounds when they are about 5 months old. They should eat not more than 330 pounds of feed for each 100 pounds of gain from weaning to market.

If overfinished, even meat-type hogs will carry too much fat.

You can raise meat-type hogs to market weight with less feed than you need for fat hogs. In 1955, the Ohio Swine Evaluation Station fed 2 pigs separately from each of 108 litters. Meat-type hogs grading U.S. Number 1 required 24 pounds less feed to put on 100 pounds of gain than fat hogs grading U.S. Numbers 2 and 3.

Feeding costs at Iowa State College in 1955 were 69 cents less per 100 pounds of gain for meat type than for fat hogs.

MANAGING MEAT-TYPE HOGS

Profitable hog production calls for good year-round management. There are advantages to having several farrowings a year. Schedule farrowings to use your equipment fully but not beyond capacity. Choose the system that fits your farm work.

Keep your herd in good health. Prevent diseases and parasites. Clean and disinfect pens thoroughly after each farrowing. Haul the sow and her litter to clean ground when the pigs are 10 to 14 days old.

Castrate male market pigs early, preferably before weaning.

Vaccinate for hog cholera when pigs are 6 to 8 weeks old.

The National Swine Growers Council recommends that you figure backfat thickness in a live hog as the average depth of three probes. For uniform measurements, probe through the fat to the lean meat 3 inches to right or left of the back midline at these points:

1. The first rib, directly above and 1 inch behind the front of the front leg.
2. The last rib (middle of the back).
3. The last lumbar vertebra, directly above the point of the rear flank.

N-21117

Select and separate breeding gilts from market pigs when they weigh 200 pounds. Keep gilts from getting too fat at breeding time.

MARKETING MEAT-TYPE HOGS

If possible, select a market that buys hogs by grade. Top your hogs at the weight and finish that go with the lean pork consumers want.

Multiple farrowing helps you market regularly, the year round. A steady supply strengthens and stabilizes prices.

The packer finds a better market for pork when he furnishes the retailer a steady supply—instead of an uncertain one. The retailer can advertise more effectively and increase sales.

All this can mean more profit to you—the meat-type hog producer.

Prepared by
Animal Husbandry Research Division, Agricultural Research Service
with the cooperation of the Federal Extension Service
and the Consumer and Marketing Service.

Issued November 1957
Slightly revised July 1965

Washington, D.C.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402—Price 5 cents

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1965 OF—771-630